

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 TEL AV 04082 251454Z
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
-----130619 251532Z /46

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FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2173
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM PRIORITY
USMISSION USUN NY PRIORITY

S E C R E T TEL AVIV 4082

EXDIS

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y-CAPTION "EXDIS" ADDED

E. O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PEPR MOPS IS LE
SUBJ: ME STAFF GROUP: ISRAELI INTENTIONS TOWARD PALESTINIANS
IN TYRE

REFS: (A) BEIRUT 1551 (NOTAL), (B) BEIRUT 1611 (NOTAL),
(C) BEIRUT 1621 (NOTAL), (D) STATE 77672

1. OUR JUDGMENT IS THAT THE ISRAELIS DID NOT TAKE
TYRE BECAUSE:

A. IT WOULD HAVE INVOLVED HEAVY IDF CASUALTIES,
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AND A MAJOR ISRAELI POLITICAL CONSIDERATION IN THE
LEBANON ACTION FROM THE START WAS TO KEEP ISRAELI
CASUALTIES AT A MINIMUM.

B. IT WOULD HAVE RESULTED IN NUMEROUS CIVILIAN
CASUALTIES, AND THE MEDIA COVERAGE OF WHICH
WOULD HAVE BEEN DAMAGING TO ISRAEL'S IMAGE ABROAD.

C. WORLD OPINION PROBABLY WOULD HAVE REACTED ADVERSELY TOWARD ISRAEL IF A NASTY HOUSE-TO-HOUSE BATTLE FOR TYRE HAD BEEN WAGED. PLO FIGHTING SKILLS PROBABLY WOULD HAVE LOOKED BETTER THERE THAN IN OPEN FIELD OPERATIONS.

2. WE HAVE NO DOUBT THAT THE IDF IS WELL INFORMED ABOUT THE ARMS AND MILITARY INFRASTRUCTURE IN THE REFUGEE CAMPS AROUND TYRE. WE ALSO DOUBT THAT THEY HAVE ANY ILLUSIONS ABOUT UNIFIL CLEANING THE CAMPS. HOWEVER, THE GOI WILL EXPECT UNIFIL TO EXERT EVERY EFFORT TO INTERDICT THE LAND AND SEA ROUTES OUT OF TYRE WHICH MIGHT BE USED BY THE PALESTINIANS TO ATTACK ISRAELI OR LEBANESE CHRISTIAN TARGETS. FAILURE BY THE UNIFIL TO ACHIEVE THIS COULD, OF COURSE, LEAD TO UNILATERAL IDF ACTION AT SOME FUTURE DATE.

3. RE PARA 6, REFTTEL B, WE DO NOT BELIEVE THE ISRAELIS WANT TYRE TO REMAIN AS A "FOCU OF INFECTION". TYRE WAS NOT PART OF THE ORIGINAL ISRAELI INCURSION PLAN NOR WAS ITS CAPTURE ESSENTIAL TO ACHIEVING THE BASIS ISRAELI OBJECTIVE. AS EXPLAINED EARLIER IN THIS MESSAGE, TAKING TYRE SIMPLY WAS NOT JUDGED WORTH THE COST. THEY ARE NOT LOOKING FOR ANYTHING TO
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JUSTIFY THEIR CONTINUED PRESENCE IN LEBANON; TO THE CONTRARY, THEY WANT TO WITHDRAW AND LEAVE THE NASTY WORK TO UNIFIL -- PROVIDED UNIFIL CAN DO THE JOB.

4. WE FOUND THE BACKGROUND IN STATE 77672 VERY USEFUL AND HOPE TO SEE MORE OF IT. VIETS

NOTE BY OC/T: EXDIS CAPTION ADDED BY MR. SUMMERS, S/S-O.

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NNN

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